

Why are you an Atheist?

Questions and Answers

I am an atheist. That means I don't believe in gods or anything divine.

At first, this pamphlet was supposed to be a funny response to missionaries that try to convince me of their beliefs. However, after some thought I realized that this kind of pamphlet is a pretty good idea: An easy way to explain what I believe and why.

It's important to note that I can only speak for myself. Other people may have different motivations, thoughts and ideals. Please keep that in mind.

Equally as important is that by the same logic no one else can speak for me. Thoughts and ideas of other agnostics or atheists don't necessarily apply to me, too.

Why don't you believe in gods?

The answer is simple: I haven't found a reason to convince me that a specific belief or religion is worth believing in.

When I look around, I can explain everything I need to know without the need of a god.

Basically, I am missing concrete evidence that suggests a divine being exists that I should believe in.

What would you accept as evidence?

Many people think they have evidence that suggests that their respective religion is the right one. Sadly, that evidence is usually anecdotal and therefore not particularly convincing.

Additionally, these arguments are often times astonishingly similar across multiple different religious beliefs. Sometimes they're even

identical. They can't all be right about having the right belief. So who is wrong and why?

Since I don't know what I would accept as evidence I'm going to ask you the same question: What would you accept as evidence that would make you believe in one of the many gods that you don't believe in?

What do you have to lose?

A popular argument among theists is that you have nothing to lose but everything to gain as a believer but nothing to gain as an atheist.

This argument leaves out an important detail: There's more than one religion. About 32% of the population are Christian. 26% are Muslim, 15% Hindus and so on. Why are you so sure that you're the one with the right belief? Even if you know for a fact that Christianity is the right religion, do you know you're the right kind of Christian?

Even if you're sure that a god exists, your chance of practicing the right religion is slim. So why would I choose your religion and not a different one?

Also, believing doesn't mean you have nothing to lose. You lose time, and lots of it.

Do you think you have all the answers?

No, but I'm pretty sure nobody else has them either.

Aren't you just an agnostic?

Well, yes and no: I'm not "just an agnostic". I'm both an agnostic and an atheist. I'm agnostic because I can't know if such a thing as gods exists. Gods are fundamentally unprovable.

However, I'm also atheist because I don't believe gods exist. The two aren't mutually exclusive.

Where did life come from?

According to our knowledge, life happened by accident. Molecules arranged themselves into amino acids that make up proteins that – along with lipids, nucleic acids and carbohydrates – make up cells that make up plants and animals. These organisms then reproduce and develop through the evolutionary processes and at some point go extinct again.

I'd like to mention that evolution isn't a theory. It's one of the most proven and indisputable facts of nature.

Aren't the Bible/Koran/Veda/Tanach/Book of Mormon evidence?

To be honest, I haven't read any religious text in its entirety. I did read many passages, though, none of which convinced me.

To me, these texts are interesting due to their ability to excite people and make them build their entire life around them. They aren't proof of divine existence, though.

Even if it were, the same question arises: Why is your religious text the right one? Why does your text prove the existence of your god? Why don't other religious texts prove the existence of their respective deities?

Another interesting aspect is the similarity of the different texts. Most tell similar tales of creation, miracles, morals, sacrifice and redemption but also war, murder, genocide, hate, torture and other terrible things.

Isn't atheism a religion, too?

No, atheism is not a religion. Atheism merely is the term used when someone draws the conclusion that no such thing as gods exists. I myself am atheist due to the lack of evidence. This can vary per person, though.

If there is no god, why do you care? Can't you just let us believe?

First of all, you don't leave us alone, either. It's usually believers that walk around talking about religion, trying to convince others to believe as well.

Sadly, religion is way too present and important in our society. I don't mind it when people like the idea of having a spiritual, divine being watching over them. However, this should be a private matter.

If I enjoy drinking coffee, I don't walk around telling everyone drinking a cup of tea about how great coffee is. It is expected of me to enjoy my coffee and not bother anyone with my personal preferences.

Religion is everywhere, even in politics. Many political campaigns use religion and faith as a way to win people over. Yet political issues have nothing to do with religion in the vast majority of cases. Moreover, I personally find it critical to impose one's religious faith politically. After all, most of the people in our society are not part of your religion.

Furthermore, no one should be forced or feel forced to practice religion. It doesn't matter whether this comes about in religious education or through societal pressure. I also find religious upbringings to be critical because, to a certain extent, the child is deprived of the opportunity to develop an independent world view. Religion generally has to take a more reserved position in society and in public.

What proof do you have that God doesn't exist?

This is a frequently asked question to atheists and agnostics. Unfortunately, it is based on a huge logical error.

If I claim to be able to fly and you don't believe me, it's not your responsibility to prove that I can't fly. If I claim to be able to fly, I have to provide the proof.

In the same way, you must also provide proof if you claim that there is a God.

Aren't you afraid of hell?

I could ask you the same question: Aren't you afraid that maybe your God isn't the right one after all and you'll be punished for practicing the wrong religion? Are you afraid that Kali will punish you and you will be reborn as a grasshopper?

I don't have this fear because I don't believe in Kali or reincarnation. Just as I don't believe in all the other gods and all the other divine punishments. That's why I'm not afraid of hell either.

Where do your morals come from, if not from God and the Bible?

My morals come first and foremost from myself and my genes. People live in groups. If you are not part of a group, you have a worse chance of survival than a member of the group. This means that over thousands of years, it was mainly those people who behaved socially and were part of a group who were able to reproduce. These genes have therefore prevailed and spread.

Anyone who killed, stole, beat, annoyed or behaved asocially in any other way was excluded from the group and died or was unable to reproduce. So it's worth it to behave socially.

In addition to this biological aspect, there is the upbringing. I was brought up by my parents and they taught me to enforce these biological principles of group life and to behave accordingly.

What are humans?

Humans are animals. But a special animal. Humans can create a completely unique reality. We can make up worlds and believe in them so much that they become real for us. That's also how I explain religion. I don't know whether other animals can do the same. But I do know that humans can, which I find very fascinating.

Incidentally, I find the characterization of humans as the "crown of creation" arrogant and vain.

Is there a mind or a soul?

Again: I don't know, but I have no reason to believe it. I believe that there is nothing supernatural, spiritual or anything like that. For me, my "mind" is simply my brain. My brain is wired in a certain way,

which is why I am the way I am, like the things I like, think the things I think, etc.

For this reason, I do not see myself as superior to other animals. I have no proof that humans have a soul or something else spiritual that no other animal has. As long as I have no proof of this and it cannot be disproved, I have no reason to believe in it.

Additional info & web links

I hope that this document has helped you in some way to understand how some of us think. Perhaps it has even given you some food for thought. Of course, this pamphlet cannot cover this entire topic in detail, but that is not the intention.

There are many more opinions, ideas, views and information to be found online, but remember that only I can speak for myself.

Here are a few links:

<https://infidels.org/library/modern/mathew-intro/>

<https://ffrf.org/>

<https://lemmy.world/c/atheism>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atheism>

<https://atheism.weebly.com/>

<https://www.atheists.org/activism/resources/>

You can find a digital copy of this pamphlet under:

<https://archive.org/details/atheism-pamphlet>



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